

Dear Mom and Pops,

May 26, 2010

I am sitting in the Midas Muffler shop in Phoenix... actually Scottsdale, Arizona.

The van has sounded like a really big truck for a month now. I thought the tailpipe had just disconnected from the muffler as it was kinda dangling off the back but when Midas raised it on their lift the problem was obvious. The whole muffler assembly had holes in it and was falling apart. Too many Mexican speed bumps with a way overloaded vehicle I suspect. So here I sit ...

Things were a little less active around the boat this month. Lori and Alison flew out on the 6th and I was



left alone. It has been long while since I have had such silence and it is hard to get used to. The boat is moored off to the side away from the other boats almost in a little

cove of its own. That may be deemed as romantic to some... but it is a little too isolated for me. I heard noises at night... probably just fish... but it made it kinda hard to sleep.

To prepare for my trip to the USA I needed to empty everything out of the van and put it into the boat. So I moved the boat to the guest dock by the office for the day. Nice... I plugged in and turned on the fridge to get its temperature down, charged up the batteries, filled the tank with water, and ran a bunch of loads of laundry in my little washing machine. All the while I was taking load after load down the ramp and into the boat. It took most of the day to get all the stuff down and by then the wind had

picked up so much it was forcing the boat against the dock. I couldn't see how I could get it off the dock and back to the mooring buoy by myself so I spent the night there. Then I realized how much better the internet worked so close to the office so I got permission to move the boat temporarily to a mooring buoy right off the docks. Much better, shorter dingy ride to and from the dock and the sleeping is much easier closer to civilization and away from strange noises.

Yikes what a pile of stuff. There is stuff everywhere. Sails, spare boat parts, tools, Christmas ornaments and lights, winter clothes, suitcases, dressy clothes, camping gear, toys (for Andreas visits), river rafting bags, bike, pressure washer, and a bunch of stuff I keep meaning to sell at the local swap meet. It took days but I managed to squeeze it all into the forward cabin. Between all of it I was doing internet work



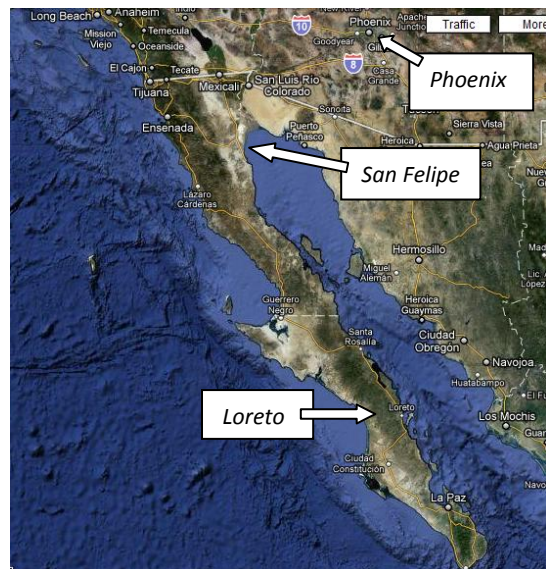
for Leslie... designing a new catalog, sending out advertising, fixing her list of products, redoing the website, and a gazillion other things. The internet is so amazing. I can accomplish so much from so far away.

It took all of the two weeks but I did manage to pack for this trip too. In packing it soon became obvious that I would have to leave a little early because the town of Loreto just didn't have what I needed like "Shoe Goo" to

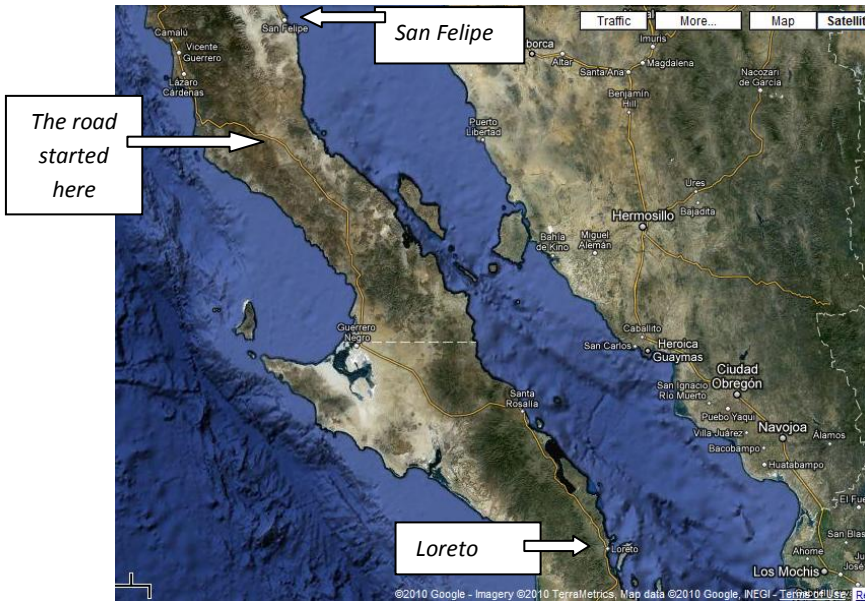
fix my hiking boots, "Seam Sealer" to fix my leaky tent, biodegradable camping soap, and quite a long list of things. So I jumped on the internet and found an awesome motel in Scottsdale with a kitchen for \$45 per night. Yikes, what a steal and it is an amazing place. I have been here for 3 days and have not eaten out once. But I am getting ahead of myself.

My final task in Puerto Escondido was to get the boat back to its assigned mooring and get it ready to leave. I put anti chafe on the bow lines, took off the headsail and put it inside (getting awfully crowded in there!) changed the oil, flushed vinegar through the heads (keeps the calcium deposits from building up inside the hoses, put water in the batteries, shut the thru-hulls, locked all the hatches and ports, and cleared everything off the deck and put it all down below. I had to take many dingy trips back and forth to load the rafting and travel stuff into the van as well as bedding, cooler, tools, for the drive. I also made and packed all the food I would need for the drive up. I can go faster if I don't have to stop and find a place to eat.

I left early in the morning and intended to drive to San Felipe. I had spent a long time studying the map



and did not want to take the time and the gas to go all the way to San Diego and then across to Phoenix. There were conflicting reports regarding the road conditions on the shortcut between Highway 1 and



San Felipe so I emailed the Gringo San Felipe website for more information. The guy said the road was rough but passable and I would just have to take it slow in some spots. Well let me tell you he was completely incorrect! It started out to be gravel with washboard bumps where I managed to go about 25 miles per hour but it got a lot worse. Pretty soon I heard this scraping noise and the tailpipe had totally come off the muffler and was dragging on the road. So I got out a piece

of rope and tied the tailpipe to the bumper. As I was navigating the pot holes, rocks, and lumps I started freaking out that I would get two flat tires and nobody would come by for days. Then I started obsessing that if I did have to go for help I couldn't leave all my stuff in the van. It was a pretty intense drive. The 55 miles took me 4-1/2 hours and I was completely physically and mentally exhausted. I finally made it to San Felipe at 7:30 pm and got to turn my clock back, YAY it's only 6:30! After surviving the drive I felt I deserved a cheap hotel... I was tired so the hotel didn't matter. In the morning I kinda thought I should have gone for at least a middle of the road hotel... but the condition of the room got me up early, back on the road, and pointed towards the USA!

I have been very busy repairing gear and trying to minimize the stuff I will bring. Here is a picture of my tent... well actually its Dale's tent. It is just a pole in the middle and a teepee like cover. It's perfect for the Grand Canyon because air can come in under the sides and keep it nice and cool. I have a cot for the inside to keep me off the ground and away from



Pretty nice lookin' hotel for only \$45 per night including breakfast and a cocktail at 5!

creepy crawly things. The best thing is that with only one pole it all squeezes down very small and does not take up much space. I have now reduced everything I need for 19 days to 2 medium size and one small bag. That includes all clothing, tent, cot, sleeping bag, sandals, snacks, alcohol, shower stuff, hiking boots, rain gear, and more. All except for my chair for camp, my life jacket, and my solar shower. A pretty amazing feat! Now if I can just exist for 19 days with only 4 pairs of shorts and 4 shirts. Ha, ha... I will probably be doing laundry on the fifth day!

There are 15 people going on the trip. A few you may remember are friends of Dales and were on the trip in 2006: Mike Christener (student of Dale), Tim Horne (rafting friend of Dale), and Vance Bristow (friend of Dale and Mark Onesty). There is only one other person I know and that is Janet, a friend I have not seen in about 10 years. She used to be married to one of Dales students Doug Bacheldor. She has since remarried and her new husband is a rafter too. It will be good to meet some new people.

I will be riding on this big cataraft (catamaran/raft) that is so big it needs an outboard motor. There are 3 other people on the boat. Tim Horne will be driving so I have no worries as he is



an excellent boatman. My task during the trip will be to follow the river maps and always know where we are. They are always amazed that I can tell them (usually without even looking at the map) where we are. I have never told them how easy it is. The raft travels at about 4 miles per hour so I just keep an eye on my watch and always know what mile number we are at. But it is interesting to follow along the river map and look for geological formations, historical canyons, and look at and take note of possible future camp sites. My other task will be to watch over the produce. I am glad I was assigned this one because in 2006 we didn't do it very well and lost a lot due to spoilage.

Tomorrow I leave Phoenix and head for Lees Ferry, Arizona which is where the trip starts. We will spend Friday the 28th rigging the rafts and distributing the food and group gear among the boats. Years ago we had to put together menus, shop, buy, and pack all the food. Now days you just hire it done. A company in Flagstaff does all of the provisioning and meets us at Lees Ferry with coolers and boxes all packed. The coolers are all taped shut and say what day you are supposed to open them so that everything stays cold and fresh. In 2006 we still had cocktail ice when we opened the cooler on our 16th night! Now that was cause for celebration!

I will be sure to take lots of photos!

Love,

Patsy